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1928

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THESIS

SOURCES OF THE ARTHURIAN LEGENDS

Submitted by

FLORENCE BAILEY

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In partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

1928

PREFACE

In preparing this sketch of the Arthurian Legends, I have endeavored to enumerate all the early sources of the legends, British, Welsh, Norman-French, Armorican, and the like; then to show how the early writers, beginning with Map and Wace, elaborated the subjects making the epic into a romance. Later writers, Malory, Spenser, and especially Tennyson have been dealt with as fully as space will permit.

More time has been devoted to Tennyson than to any of the others, as his version is the best known to the world, and deals with the subject in a style more spiritualized than that of any of his predecessors.

Writers, like Morris, Swinburne and Arnold have been included to make the record as complete as possible.

The twentieth century versions have been added for the same reason, though one feels that an apology is due the reader for the inclusion of Erskine's "Galahad".

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INTRODUCTION

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Historical Basis of Legends
The Very Earliest Legends

Arthur, about whom so many legends have centred for many centuries, is supposed to have been a British king or chieftain of the sixth century. The name, Arthur, has been stated by Professor Rhys to come from an Aryan root which means "to plough". (1) He speaks also of frequent occurrence of the legends, in these words: "There is no great literature of the Continent which does not betray the influence of the Brythonic hero Arthur, whom his people as late as the time of Henry II expected to see returning from the Isle of Avalon hale and strong,and longing to lead his men and countrymen to triumph over the foe and the oppressor. So real was this sanguine expectation that it is supposed to have counted with the English king as one of the forces which he had to quell in order to obtain quiet from the Welsh. The monks of Glastonbury proceeded to discover there the coffin of Arthur, his wife and his son. This was to convince the Welsh of the unreasonableness of their reckoning on the return of Arthur, who had been dead some six hundred years. The Welsh, however, went on believing here and there in the eventual return of Arthur; and in modern times a shepherd is now and then related to have chanced on a cave where Arthur's men are sleeping in the midst of untold treasure, awaiting the signal for their sallying forth into battle." (2)

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Gurteen tells us that "this cyclus of romances, built up as it was on a tiny germ of history, on the Bardic poems of Wales and Brittany, on local traditions, Church legends and Latin chronicles, was nevertheless, in its fully developed form, the outgrowth of the political, ecclesiastical and social conditions of the court of Henry II of England." (3)

This is a reference to the version of Walter Map who was the first to make these legends into real literature. However, before the time of Map, we find Nennius,and still earlier,Gildas mentioning Arthur.

In these two writers, we find Arthur mentioned rather as a general or chieftain than as a prince, and the accounts given are bold narratives of battles, without any romantic touches. Memories of these battles seem to have been preserved in song and legend, giving rise to a sort of hero-worship.

Littledale, in his essays on the "Idylls of the King", speaks of the development of these legends, and their preservation to this day; " and still many of the folk songs of modern Brittany tell, in riddling triplets of old time, the deeds of Arthur and Merlin." (4)

He says further: "The early Christian missionary monks, some of them excellent story tellers, never hesitated to modify pagan traditions, if by so doing they might propagate Christian doctrines; and under their treatment the Arthurian legends grew still fuller of the marvellous-the weird enchantments, the "dragons of the prince," and monsters of Druidic superstition,

Curtsen tells us that "this cycle of romances, built up as it was on a tiny seam of history, on the Bardic poems of Wales and Brittany, on local traditions, Church legends and Celtic superstitions, was never-ending, in its fully developed form, the counterpart of the political, ecclesiastical and social conditions of the court of Henry II of England." (3)

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continuing side by side with the mysteries and miracles of the religion of the Cross." (5)

"Le clerge, en l'adoptant pour son heros, a rendu au monde reel le demidieu des Bardes." Ville marque, Table Ronde, p. 18.

The Breton legends were brought over from Brittany by Walter Calessius (1125) who gave them to Geoffrey of Monmouth. (6)

Geoffrey of Monmouth used these Breton stories as the basis of the Latin Historia Britonum, which is largely fictitious.

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In 1155, Wace wrote the "Geste de Britons," or "Brut d'Engleterre."

All these stories grew up independently, Walter Map being the first to introduce the Grail legend into his narrative. The earlier writers borrowed either from Nennius or from Geoffrey of Monmouth, who certainly used Nennius as the basis of his stories. Then, we have Robert de Borron, who wrote the "Legend of Joseph of Arimathea", sometimes called the "Little St. Graal". "There is nothing in this work, however which is directly connected with Arthur. By some it has been attributed to a Latin, but not now producible, "Book of the Graal," by others to Byzantine originals." (8)

"Besides this, there are, the "Merlin" attributed also to Robert de Borron, wherein the Welsh legends begin to

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have more definite influence. This, in its turn, leads to Artus, which gives the early history of the great king. Then comes the most famous, most extensive, and finest of all the romances, that of Lancelot du Lac, which is certainly in part, and perhaps in great part, the work of Map; as is also the mystical and melancholy but highly practical"Quest of the Saint Graal", a quest of which Galahad and Lancelot, not, as in the earlier legends, Percival, are the heroes. To this succeeds the "Mort Artus", which forms the conclusion of the whole, properly speaking. This, however, does not entirely complete the cycle. Later than Borron, Map, and their unknown fellow workers (if such they had) arose one or more trouveres, who worked up the ancient Celtic legends and lays of Tristram into the "Romance of Tristram", connecting this more or less clumsily with the main legend of the Round Table. Other legends were worked up into the " ominium gatherum" of Giron le Courtois, and with these the work proper ceases. The later poems are attributed to two persons, called Luce de Gast and Helie de Borron. But not the slightest testimony can be adduced to show that any such persons ever had existence."(9)

II Nennius-Walter Map-Geoffrey of Monmouth-Chretien de Troyes,etc.

Gildas, the earliest of the historians, has been dismissed with a word, both because so little is known of him, and because he has nothing to say about Arthur, and little about the battles in which Arthur was supposed to have fought.

Nennius, however, is worthy of more particular mention. No two authorities agree as to the exact date of Nennius, but he probably lived about 800 A. D. The Historia Brittonum ascribed to him, is a mass of mingled history and geography of Britain, fact and legend appearing in equal amount.

Tradition, as found in the songs of the old Welsh bards, must next be considered. The bards in question probably lived in Wales, during the sixth and seventh centuries. The songs were compiled into maunscripts during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. "The oldest of all these is that known as the Black Book of Carmathen, compiled during the latter part of the twelfth century. The Book of Aneirin, is the next oldest manuscript and is probably to be assigned to the thirteenth century. To the thirteenth century, also , belongs The Book of Taliesin; The Red Book of Hergest, dates from the end of the fourteenth century. These "four ancient books" constitute, together, our chief available repertory of the early poetry of the Kymry.

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not only in Wales, but in Cornwall and Brittany, at the very beginning of the twelfth century is proved by an account given by certain monks of Laon of a tumult caused at Bodmin in the year 1113 by the refusal of one of their number to admit that Arthur still lived." (10)

To return to Nennius: here we have the first extant historic mention in prose of Arthur (in this Historia Brittonum.) "The magnanimous force of Britain, fought against the Saxons, and although there were many more noble than himself, yet he was twelve times chosen their commander, and was as often conqueror. In the eighth battle, Arthur bore the image of the Holy Virgin, mother of God, upon his shoulders, and through the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Mary, put the Saxons to flight, and pursued them the whole day with great slaughter. In the twelfth battle, Arthur penetrated to the Hill of Badon, and in this engagement nine hundred and forty fell by his hand alone, no one buttthe Lord affording him assistance. In all these engagements the Britons were successful, for no strength can avail against the will of the Almighty."

Gurteen says of this account,"Naturally enough,as it was written by an ecclesiastic, we have a religious element introduced into what was a plain historical fact. Nennius clothes him with an air of sanctity;states him to have borne the image of the Virgin on his shield; in fact, draws upon an ecclesisastical imagination rather than upon authentic history."(11)

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to the second half of the tenth century, and which "presents the mythical foe in an altogether historical aspect." (12)

Apparently, William of Malmesbury writes of Arthur and the legends only to criticise, for he says,"This is the Arthur, of whom nowadays the frivolous tales of the Britons babble (de quo Brittonum nugae hodieque delirant) but who evidently deserved celebration not in the dreams of fallacious fable but in the declaration of authentic history."

Geoffrey of Monmouth greatly embellished the original story, and when the history reached the continent, versions began to appear with all sorts of traditions added to them.

Le Romans de Brut of Wace (1155) is especially romantic. His version is important largely because he wrote in the vernacular.

Then Layoman, while basing his story on that of Wace, enriches it with additions from other quarters. Elves and fairies are Arthur's special patrons in this version.

Of the metrical romances, the most important are those attributed to Chrestien de Troyes. Not very much is known of Chrestien's life. We do know, however, that he was connected with courtly life. The love motif is prominent in all his stories. There are five of them in existence. There is supposed to have been also a Tristan romance, since lost. "Le chevalier a la Charrette" is a very close rendering of an episode of Map's Lancelot. Then we have"Le Chevalier au Lyon" the exact origin of which is unknown. Eric et Enide, of Welsh origin (Tennyson uses this same legend in one of his Idylls); Cliges, really the first Roman d'Aventures; and lastly, Percevale which was contributed to by successive

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versifiers until it contained (given by some authorities as forty two thousand) fifty thousand lines. This last is probably in part the work of Robert de Borron.

The Percevale le Gallois of Chrestien and his continuation was thus amplified partly by the imporation of incidents and episodes from other works, but still more by indulging in constant diffuseness and commonplaces.(12)

From a literary point of view, the prose romances rank far higher, especially those in which Map had a hand. Chrestien's stories were all in verse, and this undoubtedly added much to their popularity in a day when "the reciter was still the general if not the only publisher, and recitation almost of necessity implied practical form." (13)

The style of Map and Chrestien may be seen in the following extracts:

"Atant sont venue le chevalier jusqu'an pont: lors commencent à plorer top durement tuit ensamble. Et Lanceloz lor demande porquoi il plorent et font tel duel. Et il dient que c'est por l'amour de lui, que trop est perillox li ponz. Atant esgarde Lanceloz l'ève de çà et de là: si voit que elle, est noire et coranz. Si avint que sa vene torna devers la cite, si vit la tor ou la raine estoit as fenetres." (From Map's "Chevalier a la Charrette.")

From the Verse of Chrestien

Le droit chemin vont cheminant,
Tant que li jors vet déclinant,
Et vienent au pou de l'espeé
Apres none, vers la vesprée.
Au pié del pont, qui molt est max,
Sont descendu de lor chevax,
Et voient l'ève félenesse
Noire et bruiant, roide et espesse,
"Tant leide, et tant epprantable,
Com se fust li fluns au déable;
Et tant périlleuse et parfonde
Qu'il n'est rien nul an tot le monde
S'ele i chévit, ne fust alée,
Ausi com an la mer betée."

III Sir Thomas Malory to Spenser

There seems no better way of beginning an account of Malory and his tales than by quoting from "King Arthur and His Noble Knights" by Mary Macleod ("Introduction"):

"There is no more delightful book of its kind in the English language than Malory's "Morte D'Arthur", and there are few that in certain periods at least have had more numerous or more illustrious readers. It was written at a time when our language was greatly unsettled and it undoubtedly exercised much influence in settling it. It furnishes an excellent specimen and a conspicuous standard of English prose. At an epoch when the age of chivalry was swiftly passing away, it caught and preserved its fading colors. It reduced the old cumbrous and endless romances to convenient and readable dimensions, and provided a charming summary of them both for its own age and all ages to come."

Strachey's edition of Caxton's text, gives us Caxton's Preface, which sets forth the purpose of Malory's tales as follows: "Herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good, and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renown. --All is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue, by which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life to come unto everlasting bliss in heaven, the which He grant us, That reigneth in heaven, the

blessed Trinity. Amen."

Strachey's comment on this is: "Caxton's Preface which shows that however strongly he may have been urged to undertake the work, he was not less moved by his own love and reverence for "the noble acts of chivalry", and his deep sense of his duty and responsibility in printing what he believed would be for the instruction and profit of his readers."

The book entitled "Morte D'Arthur" was written in 1470 A.D. Little is known of the life of the author, or his nationality. Some authorities have claimed that Malory was a Welshman, but "though Caxton tells us that there were books in Welsh about Arthur and his knights, Malory never quotes any but the French, and English books. He shows no acquaintance with Welsh legends or traditions, unless it be with those in Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote in Latin, nor of any local knowledge of Welsh places." (Strachey)

"The first edition of Le Morte D'Arthur was printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1485. The two next editions were printed by Wynkyn de Worde, the chief workman and successor of Caxton in 1498 and 1529. That of 1498 is not an exact reprint of Caxton's, there are differences of spelling and occassionally a word." (Strachey)

"It has been too commonly assumed that, because Caxton says that Sir Thomas Malory took his work "out of certain books of French and redueed it into English, "he was a mere compiler and translator. But the book itself shows that he was its author-its "maker", as he would have called it. Notwithstanding his occassional inartificial manner of connecting the materials drawn from the old romance, there is an epic unity and harmony," a be-

ginning, a middle, and an end, "which if they have come by chance and not of design,-which only befalls an Homeric or a Shakespearlike man." (Strachey)

Maccallum does not speak any less highly of Malory. "Thus there is a discrepancy between the earlier and the later Arthurian romances of the Middle Ages, and since besides they had grown up in very different ways, taking their first suggestions from different Celtic legends, their increments from different stories that were in the air, their form from different minds, and their tone from different tunes and from different impulses of doctrinal Christianity, they present a very tangled and complicated appearance. Their differences amount often to direct contradiction, their mutual independence goes the length of incompatibility. Yet through it all there is a certain unity of theme, and the persons are, to a great extent, the same. Could not the loose threads be gathered together, and each of the adventured be assigned its proper place in one grand scheme? That was a task that might engross the best powers of the loftiest genius. But there was no genius in the Middle Ages who was fitted or was inclined to take it up. Dante, indeed, always shows profound appreciation of the Arthurian story". Indeed, he mentions many of the characters, as Tristram, Modred, Lancelot and Guenivere.

"But Dante, despite his deep sympathy with the Arthurian romances, could not occupy himself with them chiefly or wholly."

Chaucer, also, prefers to write on other subjects than Arthurian romance. "His nearest approach to an Arthurian story is in the "Wife of Bath" tale, which handles the same theme as the

ballad of Sir Gawain's marriage, but beyond putting it in King Arthur's days Chaucer does not connect it with the "Matiere de Bretagne". Chaucer rather sneers at chivalry.

But, "in the fifteenth century, there was a reversion to the Middle Ages in several important respects.--The interest in Arthurian stories ran high, and at last the task of compilation was seriously set about in the reign of Edward IV. It is characteristic that just at the final gasp of the Middle Ages, the work of welding the mass of Arthurian stories was undertaken. The "Morte D'Arthur" shows traces of this in the circumstances of its authorship and its literary position." He concludes the book with a mediaeval formula, which is characteristic of the author, just as much so as the fact that his book was printed by Caxton.

Malory, in style and diction, may at least in some respects be considered the father of modern English prose.

Professor Saintsbury, however, thinks Walter Map a greater Arthurian writer than Malory. He thinks that readers of Malory miss some of the greatness and especially of the sympathetic humanity of the original poem. (Referring especially to the Lancelot.)(The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory.)

Most of the early writers were Norman tromevères, ~~and~~ and their language, the Norman French. (Cf. Wace and Chrestien, and the extracts from "The Knight of the Cart.") Malory probably

refers to these writers and their works, when he says that he translated his stories "oute of certyn bookes of Frensshe" into middle English."After that, I had accomplysshed and fynysshed dyvers hystoryes--many noble and dyvers gentylmen of thys royame of England camen and demanded me many and oftymes wherfore that I have not do make and emprynte the noble hystorye of the Saynt greal and of the moost renouned crysten Kyng fyrst and chyef--Kyng Arthur--For to passe the tyme, this book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyve fayth and byleve that al is trewe, that is contayned herin, ye be at your lyberte; but al is wryton for our doctryne and for to beware that we falle not to vyce ne synne, but texercyse and folowe vertu, by whyche we may come and atteyne to good fame and renonne in thys lyf, and after thys shorte and transytorye lyf to come unto everlasting blysse in hevan."

At the end of the book, Caxton writes: "Thus endeth this noble and joyous booke, entytled "La Mort D'Arthur". Notwythstanding it treateth of the byrth, lyf and actes of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of his noble knightes of the rounde table, theyr marveyllous enquestes and adventures, thachyevyng of the sane real, and in the ende la Morte D'Arthur, with the dolorous deth and departying out of this worlde of them al. Which booke was reduced into Englysshe by Syr Thomas Malory, Knight, as before is sayd, and by me devyded into XXI bookes, chaptyred, and emprynted, and fynysshed in thabbey Westmestre the last day of July, the year of our Lord MCCCCLXXXV Caxton me fieri fecit."

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At the end of the book, Caxton writes: "Thus endeth this noble and joyeuse booke entytled "La Mort D'Arthur". Notwythstandyng it treatyth of the byrth, lyf and actes of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of his noble knyghtes of the round table, their merveylous aventures and adventures, thaccomplysshment of the sanc real, and in the ende le Morte D'Arthur, with the dolorous deth and departyng out of this worlde of them al. Which booke was reduced into englysshe by Syr Thomas Malory, knyght, as before is sayd, and by me devyded into XXI bookes, chaptered, and emprynted, and fynysshed in the abbey Westmestre the last day of July, the yeer of our lord MCCCCLXXX Caxton me fecit fault."

Gurteen criticises Malory as follows:

"Sir Thomas Malory can scarcely be regarded as one of the Romancers except by way of courtesy, since this cyclus must be considered to have recured its finishing touches when Walter Map published his "Roman de la Mort Artus." Still, keeping this fact in mind, we may justly accord Malory a niche in the poet's corner, as the last, for many a long year, indeed for over three hundred years, who did anything to revive an interest in England's oldest romances or legends. --We must not forget, however, that it is not an original work but simply a compilation . That Malory's work is not an artistic or perfect production is evident to every critical reader. It contains no well-conceived plot, or rather no plot at all. Adventures, battles, tournaments, and festivals are commingled in such inextricable confusion and with such a persistent disregard of the unities, that one might almost suppose the author to have been suffering from an intellectual nightmare while performing his task. At one time we read of some famous battle in which Arthur is engaged, but before the issue is finally decided we are snatched away to witness a passage of love between Lancelot and Guenivere; and scarcely is this satisfactorily concluded, when we are plunged into a melee, where spears are broken and swords clash together to watch the process of Tristan. In addition to this want of system the compiler has been guilty of so many sins of omission that any one who has read the originals from which Malory transcribed, must regret a hundred times in as many pages that the execution of the work was not performed by more skilful hands.

Still, the Mort D'Arthur, with all its imperfections, has a subtle, magnetic charm which is irresistible. Even the conspicuous absence of artificial finish only tends to heighten the effect upon the mind, and to one who is accustomed to the close drawing-room atmosphere of the modern fashionable novel to turn to Malory, is to exchange the crowded city for the free air, the green fields, and the utter listlessness of our ideal landscape." (14)

Littledale says: "The Arthurian legend did not cease to exert literary influence with the decline of mediaeval chivalry. On the contrary, it retained a strong hold upon poetic minds in all the lands where it became known.

In Italy, Dante, Ariosto and Tasso made frequent use of the stories of Arthur and Guenevere and Merlin. In Germany, the early romances of "Parzival" taken from the French stories by Wolfram von Eschenbach; of "Iwein", by Hartmann von Aue--were long popular.....

In 1587, a play "The Misfortunes of Arthur", was acted before Queen Elizabeth--It seems to be based, not on Malory, but on some of the earlier romances, and partly on Geoffrey's History, from which latter verson, however, it differs in many ways." (15)

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IV. Edmund Spenser And His Time

Littledale tells us: " We next find Edmund Spenser making considerable use of the personality of Arthur, but his object is not to reconstruct the Arthurian legend. His main intention is moral, and political; fierce wars and faithful lovers are to moralize his song; and he makes Arthur, before his coronation and before his marriage with Guenevere, the chief hero typifying magnificence, in the Aristotlian sense of perfection in all the moral virtues. He selects Arthur, he tells us, " as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former workes, and also furthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time." Spenser makes no attempt to reproduce literally the old stories of the Round Table; his fable is subordinated to his allegory throughout." (16)

Gurteen describes this allegorical style of writing as "decked with the trappings of chivalry, shrouded with the weird, the fabulous, and the supernatural, and plaintive with the moans of distressed damsels." (17)

Macallum compares Spenser with other Elizabethan writers on the subject.

"The misfortunes of Arthur, written by Thomas Hughes in 1587, is the single masterpiece of the Senecan tragic style in Elizabethan literature. ----Gorbudoc was at least a dignified tragedy, and it was only natural that Hughes should take Gorbudoc as his model. Unlike Gorbudoc, however, it does not take its plot from Geoffrey unchanged, but draws on later story as well.

IV. Round Peg or Not Pin Time

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Turner describes this allegorical style of writing as "based with the trappings of chivalry, adorned with the fairy, the idealized, and the supernatural, and plaintive with the tones of disappointed despair." (iv)

Thomas concludes Spenser with other Arthurian writers on the subject:

"The misfortunes of Arthur, written by Thomas Hughes in 1587, is the single exception of the Spenser travels style in Arthurian literature. ----Gorboduc was at least a distinct tragedy, and it was only natural that Hughes should take Gorboduc as his model. Julia Corbodoc, however, it does not take its plot from Geoffrey nor Spenser, but draws on later story as well.

From the romances, probably in the version of Malory, it has borrowed the idea that Modred is not only the nephew but the son of Arthur, and that the final ruin of the king is the punishment of his sin; and this is the final conception of the play. But in all the rest, it closely follows Geoffrey's account, without a trace of romantic episode or color, and omitting even the character and amores of Lancelot. It is the bare story of the chronicle propelled by Arthur's forbidden passion as its spring; and in this way the tragic awe is increased and an ethical explanation supplied.(18)

Maccallum further says:"Hughes has ketp true to the incidents of the pseudo-history, but recast them by borrowing from romance the idea of Arthur's incestuous guilt. Spenser, on the other hand, retains the machinery of romance, but transforms it by borrowing from the chronicles the idea of Arthur as the flower of princes. In the preface--Spenser says, "I labour to pourtraict in Arthur before he was king, the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private morall vertues," and again, "In the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular; which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that book."

--In plan and substance Spenser's poem has little connection with romantic tradition.If the allegory sets forth the universal war of good and evil and the inevitable triumph of the good, Arthur had to be represented as practically invincible

(19)

like the romances, probably in the version of Malory, it has borrowed the idea that modesty is not only the wisdom but the sum of virtue, and that the first rule of the king is the pure element of All-in; and this is the final correction of the story. But in all the rest, it closely follows Geoffrey's account, without a trace of romantic embroidery or value, and retaining even the character and morals of Lancelot. It is the best study of the chronicle produced by Arthur's fortunate passion as its motive, and in this way the tragic end is increased and an ethical explanation supplied.(12)

Matthew Arnold says:"Tennyson has kept true to the incidents of the Greek-Mabinogi, but turned them by borrowing from George the idea of Arthur's innocuous guilt. Spenser, on the other hand, retains the machinery of Geraint, but transforms it by borrowing from the chronicles the idea of Arthur as the flower of virtue. In the preface--Spenser says, "I labour to portray in Arthur before he was king, the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private moral virtues," and again, "In the person of Prince Arthur I set forth magnificence in particular, which virtue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deeds of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that book."

--In plan and structure Spenser's poem has little connection with romantic tradition. If the allegory gets from the underlying idea of love and lust and the inevitable triumph of the good, Arthur had it be represented as practically invincible

Maccalum also states:" Spenser's choice of theme may have been partly dictated by regard for one who was held in some sort to be the national hero; just as his allegory has a reference to national politics as well as to ethical theory. This patriotic note predominates in Michael Drayton, as we should expect of a poet, whose interest in his country urged him to write so largely on its annals and its localities. It is in connection with the latter that he finds an opportunity for touching on the story of Arthur. His Polyolbion is a poeticed description of the counties of England and Wales; and when he comes to a river or town associated with Arthur's name, he seizes the opportunity to celebrate his renown or to retell some local legend.

In his attitude to the legend, Drayton is neither a fanatic nor an infidel as regards either history or romance. Generally, in making use of local folklore which he jumbles together with more dignified material, he is disposed to regard the story as a genuine national tradition, raised on a basis of national fact. To him, the celebrity of Arthur is a subject for national gratulation, and redounds to the national honor. The poet's only grief is that the matter has not been utilized, and, hr, in his love for Britain, is indignant that no native Homer has grasped the occassion to extol the British name. For some abundant brain, oh, there had been a story. Beyond the blind man's night to have enhanced our glory!" (This quotation is from Book III of the Polyolbion)

Drayton, moreover, is not the only author to emphasize the legends of places connected with the name of Arthur.

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Drayton, however, is not the only author to emphasize the legends of places connected with the name of Arthur.

In a little book entitled "King Arthur in Cornwall", we find these statements:"The fame of Arthur is expressed by the association of his name with places and is greater than any other personage, save one who can claim this sort of connection with our island....Only the Devil is more often mentioned in local association than Arthur--But the two names are distributed in a very different fashion; that of the Devil is scattered impartially, being placed at random wherever thought suitable; that of Arthur is limited to certain districts in which, according to history or tradition, the hero lived or moved....

There are four groups of what are called "Arthurian Localities". Some of the designations referred to are certainly ancient, some of doubtful antiquity, some obviously modern. The four groups of "Arthurian Localities" are:

1. In North Cornwall, from Boscastle to Wadebridge; we have King Arthur's Hall, hunting seat, bed, quoit, cups, and saucers, tomb and grave. I may add Pentargon, which Mr. Baring Gould interprets as 'Arthur's Head.'

2. In Britanny, probably a mere offshoot from Cornwall-Britanny and Cornwall being closely connected geographically and by identity of race.

3. In Wales, chiefly in the south, with Caerleon--Not as a centre, but involving the north to a lesser extent.

4. In Schotland and the North of England, reaching from north of Edinburgh to south of Carlisle, and comprising the lowlands and Cornwall.

In a guide book entitled "King Arthur in Cornwall", we find these statements:"The fame of Arthur is expressed by the association of his name with places and is greater than any other personage, save one who can claim this sort of connection with our island....Only the Devil is more often mentioned in local association than Arthur--but the two names are distributed in a very different fashion; that of the Devil is scattered impartially, being placed at random wherever thought suitable, that of Arthur is limited to certain districts in which, according to history or tradition, he here lived or moved....

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2. In Brittany, probably a mere offshoot from Cornwall-Brittany and Cornwall being closely connected geographically and by identity of race.

3. In Wales, mainly in the south, with Caerleon--not as a capital, but involving the north to a lesser extent.

4. In Scotland and the north of England, reaching from north of Winchester to south of Carlisle, and comprising the lowlands and Cornwall.

The Arthurian district of the north reaches from Penwrith to Strathmore, and has supplied--a large number of Arthurian neames. Arthur's Seat occurs three times, Arthur's Chair, Camp, Lee, Fountain, Hill, Tomb; these are also to be found at the head of Loch Long, and Dunbarton Castle was known in the time of David II as Castrum Arthuri, near which, occurred Arthur's ninth battle."

One more author of this period should be mentioned, Richard Hakleyt, the author of several volumes of voyages. The very first voyage described is that of Arthur to Iceland in 517. This story is founded on an old myth.

V From Spenser to Tennyson

We learn from Milton's "Ad Mansum, that he had planned to write an Arthurian epic , for he says, "When, if ever, I shall recall to song our native kings, and Arthur devising war even below the earth, or shall sing the great-hearted however of the unvanquished Table in their bond of fellowship, and when (if only inspiration give me aid) I shall break the Saxon bands beneath the prowess of the Britons." This was in 1638-39.

About a year later, in the Epitaph of Damon, we find "I myself shall sing the Trojan craft traversing the narrow seas, and the ancient realm of Troja, Daughter of Pandras, and Brennus and Arviragus, the leaders and old Belinus and then the American settlers beneath the dominion of the Britons; then terne pregnant of Arthur of fatal fraud, and the deceptive features and assumed arms of Gorlois; 'twas a wile of Merlin."

He probably intended to make it an allegorical romance on the Spenserian plan, but, as he could not accept as fact the Arthurian tradition, decided on the greater topic of the Fall of Man.

But Maccallum says, "Now, of course, the aggregate of Arthurian tradition was still regarded among the uncritical with the utmost seriousness. Heywood, for example, considered the prohpesies of Merlin, at which the good sense of Shakespeare had laughed, not only as sanguine, but as accurate, and in 1641 treated the entire history of England as the fulfillment of the wizard's vaticinations, in a strange book with the explanatory title: "The Life of Merlin, Surnamed Ambrosius"; His

V. From Grenier to Tennyson

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Some a year later, in the Tydeyn of Taron, we find "I myself shall sing the Trojan chief traversing the barren seas, and the ancient walls of Troy. Daughter of Tantras, and Erinna and Avlingen, the leaders and old Palinus and then the Agricolan warriors beneath the dominion of the Britons, then large fragments of Arthur of lofty fraud, and the treacherous factures and amused arms of Corioln, Thus a wife of Merlin."

He probably intended to make it an allegorical romance on the Cromwelian plot, but, as he could not accept as fact the Arthurian traditions, decided on the greater topic of the fall of Man.

But Macaulay says, "Now, of course, the aggregate of Arthurian tradition was still regarded among the unlettered with the utmost seriousness. Ryscod, for example, considered the legendary of Merlin, as which the good sense of Giraldus had learned, not only as annulus, but as accurate, and in 1681 treated the entire history of England as the fulfillment of the wizard's vaticinations. In a strange book with the extraordinary title: "The life of Merlin, surnamed Ambrosius"; the

prophecies and predictions interpreted, and their truth made good by our English Annals," being a chronological history of the kings and main passages of this kingdom from Brute to the reign of our Royall Sovereign, King Charles. This was doubtless the craze of an eccentric..But an instance of the tendency to take Arthurian fiction literally is furnished by a man of authority in a notable book, the "Vray Theatre d'Honneur et de Chevalerie", by the Sieur de la Colombiere, which in 1648 was dedicated by Mazarin for the behoof of the youthful Louis XIV. It is partly a collection of heroic examples, partly a treatise on Heraldry. In the portions on Arthurian adventure, the romances are certainly called fabulous, but nevertheless their authority is taken for granted; and, as has happened in more important departments, inferences are drawn from them as though they were historical. It is amusing to find the author giving, with every appearance of credence, a list of the armorial devices of all the knights of the Round Table."

But Milton does not accept the story so readily. For in 1670, he writes, in his "History of Britain, Book III":"Who Arthur was and whether any such reigned in Britain, hath bin doubted heretofore, and may again with good reason.

But he who can accept legend for good story, may quickly fill a volume with trash; and had need be furnished with only two necessaries, leisure and belief, whether it be the writer or be that reads."

Dryden also had thought of undertaking an Arthurian

epic, based on Geoffrey of Monmouth. Scott tells us why he did not (Marmion, Introduction, Canto I) :

"Dryden in immortal strain had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength and marr'd the lofty line."

A physician named Richard Blackmore, wrote in 1695, a poem called "Prince Arthur", and two years later, a sequel, "King Arthur." These epics were harshly condemmed by Dryden, and highly praised by Addison, and Dr. Johnson in his Life of Blackmore, has both praise and blame for the poems (at least such faint praise as amounted to blame.)

Dryden's play, King Arthur, was written to glorify King Charles, and was really a sort of opera. But, as Maccalum says, " We have only an artificial farrago, taken from almost all sources save the Arthurian legend itself, and unblended by the might of any prevailing idea; the only special meaning that Dryden's play ever possessed was the political reference to Charles II. And when that was obliterated there remained only, as Scott says, a fairy tale." (Maccalum, "Tennyson's Idylls of the King and Arthurian Story," page 160.)

epic, means an "Idyll" of Monmouth. Eliot tells us why he did not (Dante, Introduction, Canto 1) :

"Dryden in imperial strain had raised the Table Round anew,
But that a tilting ring and court
Made his toil go to make their sport;
Impanoled for their diversed way,
Fit for their single, a lesser lay,
Idiopathic satire, song, and play;
The world reflected of the high design,
Fashioned the Pot-sized strength and sort'd the lofty line."

A physician named Richard Blackmore, wrote in 1695, a poem called "Prince Arthur", and two years later, a sequel, "King Arthur." These epics were heavily condemned by Dryden, and slightly criticized by Addison, and Dr. Johnson in his Life of Blackmore, has both praise and blame for the poems (at least such faint praise as amounted to blame.)

Dryden's play, King Arthur, was written to glorify King William, and was really a sort of opera. But, as Macaulay says, " It have only an artificial framework, taken from almost all sources save the Arthurian legend itself, and unclothed by the slight of any prevailing idea, the only apparent meaning that Dryden's play ever possessed was the political reference to William II. And even that was obliterated when it remained only an idle fable, a fairy tale." (Macaulay, "Temple's Idylls of the King and Arthurian Story", page 150.)

In the eighteenth century, we find very little use made of the Arthurian legend in literature, this period dealing more with ordinary human interest stories: "It seems natural that at such a time, the personages of Arthurian tradition, if they were recalled at all, should present themselves in a ludicrous light. Already, Pope and Swift had made fun of Merlin and his prophecies, but it was Fielding who, in 1730, gave the typical example of the tendency in his "Tragedy of Tragedies" or the Life and Death of Lord Thumb the Great." In this play, which amusingly travesties the high dramatic style then prevalent, Tom Thumb is represented as begotten by Merlin's art to be the glory of Arthur's court, and the defender of the realm." (Maccallum, p. 161)

To quote on, from Maccallum, "Fielding in his mock-heroic tragedy, makes use of Arthur in connection with the children's story of Tom Thumb. The association is significant. If at this time the name of Arthur still held a place in the national consciousness and remained to become something more than a name when the fitting day should dawn, it is chiefly the literature of the nursery that we have to thank for it."(Idem, page 164)

He goes on to say: "Already Chaucer had laughingly asserted:

"In tholde dayes of the Kynge Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
All was this land fulfilled of fairye :
The elf queene with her folly compaynye
Danneed ful ofte in many a grene mede."

And this humorous theory as to the date of fairy-tale adventures is the residium left when Arthurian story is at its lowest ebb. In France, Anthony Hamilton had introduced into his Contes a magician who at least had the name of Merlin, though he shows few of Merlin's traditional characteristics; and the eighteenth century chap-books (assigned conjecturally to 1750) which deal with the exploits of Tom Thumb, Jack the Giant Killer, and the like choose by preference the age of Arthur as the period of their narratives. Thus one begins:

"When good King Arthur he did reign
With all his knights about him,
Tom Thumb he then did intertain, He could not be
without him."

And in another the reminiscences are more explicit-

"In Arthur's court Tom Thumb did live,
A man of mickle might,
Who was the best of the Table Round,
And eke a worthy knight
Thus he at tilts and tournaments was entertained so
That all the rest of Arthur's knights
Did him much pleasure show,
And good Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Sir Tristram and Sir Guy;
Yet none compared to brave Tom Thumb
In acts of chivalry."

Thus King Arthur was laid up in the humble Avilion of juvenile fiction, the best he could find, till he should be healed of the grievous wound that the rationalism of the period had dealt him, and return once more to gladden the hearts of his Britons." (Idem. p. 167)

Next appeared Percy's "Reliques of English Poetry (1765); here we have the Arthurian story in ballad form. In 1764, Evans "Specimens of the Ancient Welsh Bards" was published, the first of the translations from Welsh and Breton sources.

In France, Count Louis-Elizabeth de la Vergue de Tressan wrote of Tristram and Isolt in a very sentimental style, although he makes their amour into a purely platonic friendship. His style is shown by the following quotation, in which Palamedes is taking leave of his successful rival :-

"Heureux Tristran, je vous quitte! Vos vertus, votre generosite, vous rendent digne de votre sort: puisse je bientot finir le mien dans les combats! Puisse ma mort etre honoree des larmes d'Yseult et des votres! Regrettez-moi vous deux comme celui qui vous aima le plus tendrement."

Wieland, in Germany, borrowing from these French versions produced on 1771 the "Summer's Tale" and the "Mule Without the Bridle", and in 1778, "Giron the Noble". Maccalum says:"It is noteworthy to find him making use of Arthurian subjects at all, for in those days so little was known in Germany of the Round Table that he refers his readers for further information to the Sieur de la Colombieres" Vray Theatre d'Honneur et de Chevalerie", in which, be it remarked, they would not find very much." (Maccalum, p. 175)

Thomas Warton, in 1775, wrote a poem on the Grave of King Arthur. This brings us to the time of the Romantic revival, and John Jeyden, whose "Scenes of Infancy, published in 1803, deals with Merlin and Arthur. Naturally Sir Walter Scott, with his taste for mediaevalism, would be interested in the Arthurian story, and so we find references to it in Marmion. Also in 1805, he edited the old metrical romance of Sir Tristram, and in 1813 the "Bridal of Triermain or the Vale of St. John"(This was published anonymously) "The Bridal is not so much an Arthurian poem as a poem that contains an Arthurian episode."(Arthurian Story, p. 186)

Next Reginald Heber, whose favorite reading in school had been the "Faerie Queene". As most of his poems are of the religious type, we find his Morte D'Arthur (which is only a fragment) invested with many mystical and symbolic qualities. Heber was also the author of a masque which bore the name of "Masque of Gwendolen", a fragment, in which he has entirely recast the story of Sir Gawain's marriage, combining it with the history of Merlin.

At this time in France, Baron Auguste Creuze de Lesser composed three bulky volumes of romance dealing respectively with the stories of Amadis, of Arthur, and of Charlemagne , which he afterwards collected under the common title of "Le Chevalerie". In his Arthurian compilation he shows a respectable acquaintance not only with the prose, but with the verse romances, at least with the poems of Chrestien."(Maccallum, p. 195-6) He seems, however, to have treated the story in a humorous way.

Then we come to Robert Southey, who, as a boy, admired the

Thomas Taylor, in 1772, wrote a poem on the Orphic of King Arthur. This brings us to the time of the Celtic revival, and John Ingram, whose "Essays of Ingenuity", published in 1802, deals with Merlin and Arthur. Naturally Sir Walter Scott, with his taste for mediaevalism, would be interested in the Arthurian story, and so we find reference to it in Marmion. Also in 1805, he edited the old metrical romance of Sir Tristrem, and in 1810 the "Bridal of Triermain or the Vale of St. John"(this was published anonymously) "The Bridal is not so much an Arthurian poem as a poem that contains an Arthurian episode."(Arthurian story, p. 129)

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A similar thing is Tennyson, Baron Augusta Crowns in Lancelot Gives only volumes of romance dealing respectively with the stories of Merlin, of Arthur, and of Tristram, which by coincidence coincide; under the general title of "The Idylls of the Arthurian romances" (Idyll, p. 1[illegible]) he shows a consistent purpose not only with the poems, but with the whole romance, at least with the power of Tennyson."(Idyll, p. 1[illegible]) He says, however, to have treated the story in a humorous way.

Then we come to Robert Southey, who, as a man, believed his

"Faerie Queene"; when he began to write, he used the Arthurian story as the basis of "Madoc"(published in 1805). Maccallum observes here that " A certain inclination to retain or invent a geographical position in Britain for the tales they narrate may be observed in all the writers that have been discussed, Leyden thinks of Arthur's resting place as a cavern of Eildon, Scott situates the castle of Gyneth in the Vale of St. John, Heber makes Ganora grow up in "Derwent's mountain solitudes", Southey recalls the withdrawal of Merlin to the Island of the Bards. All like to find a local habitation for their persons, which modern topographers would recognize; and in this respect the versions of French manufacture were less satisfactory than welsh tradition and the Chronicles to which it was supposed to given rise." (Arthurian Story-pages 202-203)

Next Thomas Love Peacock gave an entirely new version of the Arthurian legend to the public. In 1829, he published the "Misfortunes of Elphin;" the sources of his plot were found in Taliessin and the Life of St. Gildas, and he weaves his facts into a story which, as Maccallum says is "very slenderly Arthurian". The great and outstanding feature of his version is the treatment of the subject in the modern spirit. In this he has anticipated Tennyson.

Wordsworth wrote only one poem on the Arthurian story; this was on the theme "Artegal and Elidure"; there are occassional references to Arthurian topics in the Ecclesiastical Sonnets. The "Egyptian Maid" contains names and persons derived from Arthurian

story, but the plot is wholly the author's. This poem was published in 1835, two years later than Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott". This brings us down to the time of Tennyson, who will be taken up next.

VI Tennyson and His Contemporaries in England and Abroad

Henry Van Dyke says, in his "Studies in Tennyson": "The History of Tennyson's"Idylls of the King" is one of the most curious and unlikely things in all the annals of literature. Famous works have so often been written piecemeal and produced in parts, that readers of fiction have made a necessity of virtue, and learned to add to their faith, patience . But that a great poet should be engaged on his largest theme for more than half a century; that he should touch it first with a lyric; then with a poem which was suppressed as soon as it was written; then with four romantic idylls, followed, ten years later by yet another idyll, which is to be placed, not before or after the rest, but in the very centre of the cycle; that he should begin with the end, and continue with the beginning, and end with the middle of the story, and produce at last a poem which certainly has more epical quality than anything that has been made in English since Milton died, is a thing so marvellous that no man would credit it save at the sword's point of fact. Yet this is the exact record of Tennyson's dealing with the Arthurian legend. The "Lady of Shallott", that dreamlike foreshadowing of the story of "Elaine" was published in 1832; "Sir Galahad" and "Sir Lancelot" and Queen Guenvere" in 1842. Underneath their smooth music and dainty form they hide the deeper conception of character and life which the poet afterwards out more clearly and fully. They compare with the "Idylls" as a cameo with a statue." (P. 121-122)

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VI Tennyson and his Contemporaries in England and Abroad

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The material for the epic in the old tale of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. He has made use of History's

version, of which some new editions has been published early in the nineteenth century. He probably also made use of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation. of the "Mabinogion", which appeared in 1838, Though he has followed Malory's story in the main points he has made such changes as were needed to adapt it to readers of the mid-Victorian era. He has so spiritualized the old story, and freed it from the grossness and immorality of Malory, that Arthur appears as the perfect king.

However, his plan did not involve sticking to the historical facts, if historical they were, and so we find wide deviations. In the main, it is meant to be an allegory, King Arthur signifying religious faith; the two Gueneveres, the first primitive Christianity, the second Roman Catholicism; Modred , the skeptical understanding; Ex calibur was to signify war, etc. To be sure, he did not actually work it out in this way.

Littledale, in his "Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King" says:"With regard to the claim of Tennyson,s poem as an epic, there cannot be much serious question, the only doubt being whether a poem seemingly made up of a series of somewhat detached episodes may claim to possess the unity that must distinguish the true epic.

Tennyson's early version of the Morte D'Arthur is entitled "The Epic", and we may infer from the dialogue preceding these, "old Homeric Echoes" that the poet had originally selected the theme for epical treatment, but after treatment he had found the task too complex to be worked out in a straight line.

"You know", said Frank,"he burnt his epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books." from which we may infer at least the temperary postponement of a young poet's too ambitious designs."

Pages 33-37

He goes on to say :"If we grant that an epic may have unity of subject without unity of action, may have spiritual unity rather than dramatic unity, there we safely assert that the "Idylls of the King" belongs to the class of episodical epochs."

In his version, although he follows Malory closely, Tennyson brings in some of the old legends."Thus, the name Arthur originally denoted the Bear, Ursa Major, Arktos, and that constellation is still called in Welsh 'the chariot of Arthur." Grimm says that the Bear plays an important role in star-myths, and Wollmer calls Arthur a half-historical, half-mythological personage, in the former aspect connected with over six hundred places, names, and in the latter representing the constellation of the Great Bear; while the Round Tables denotes the circle that it described round the polar star. Tennyson touches on this in the "Holy Grail c.681; "The Seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round, so called "because they roll through such a round in heaven."

The "Lady of Shalott" was written early in Tennyson's poetic career. It was taken from an old Italian romance entirely unconnected with the usual Arthurian stories. He has made it have a mystical meaning not to be found in the original story. The beauty of the lines too, is remarkable though marked by the youthful idea that the sound is more important than the sense. The description of scenery in the early stanzas could not be excelled.

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow;
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott."

He goes on to say: "It is urged that epic may have unity of subject without unity of action, may have spiritual unity rather than dramatic unity, where we safely assert that the 'Idylls of the King' belongs to the class of episodical epopees."

In his version, although he follows Malory closely, Tennyson brings in echoes of the old legends. "Thus, the name Arthur originally denoted the Bear, Uther Major, Arthos, and that consellation is still called in Wales 'the chariot of Arthur.' Grimm says that the Bear plays an important role in star-myths, and Tolmer calls Arthur a half-historical, half-mythological personage. In the former aspect corresponds with over six hundred places, names, and in the latter representing the consellation of the Great Bear; while the Round Table denotes the circle that it describes round the polar star. Tennyson touches on this in the "Holy Grail p.88: "The Seven chief stars of Arthur's Table Round, so called 'because they roll through such a round in heaven.'"

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"The silver side the river lies
Long fields of barley and of rye,
And through the fields the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott."

His "Lady of Shalott" is afterwards developed into "Lancelot and Elaine". The "Idylls" themselves are twelve in number, as has been mentioned before, they were not produced at all in the order of the story.

"Enid" was the first. This includes what is now the third and fourth poems of the series. Vivien, Elaine, and Guenevere were next in order (1859). "The Coming of Arthur", "The Holy Grail," "Pelleas and Etarre," and "The Passing of Arthur" (which is really the last of the story) appeared in 1870. "Gareth and Lynette" and "The Last Tournament" were published in 1872. "Balin and Balan" appeared in 1885.

Before saying anything more definite about the Idylls, some mention should be made of "Galahad" and "Merlin and the Gleam." There is also a fragment entitled "Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenevere", the metre of which is similar to that of the "Lady of Shalott."

"Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenevere,
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous spring;
A gown of grass-green silk she wore
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring."

The "Sir Galahad" poem is really the first sketch of the "Holy Grail".

"My good blade carves the casques of men,
My touch lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure, etc."

All armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail."

"Merlin and the Gleam" bears the same sort of relation to the cycle when completed, that "The Lady of Shalott" bears to the cycle not yet conceived."(Macallum: "Idylls of the King

and Arthurian Story from the XVIth century, page 319.

"I am Merlin,
And I am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follows the Gleam.
.....
On the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested the gleam
.....
There on the border
Of boundless ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Bleam.
.....
A young mariner,
.....
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam."

This is suggestive of the lines in Ulysses,"who voyages on the vanishing goal,
Where gleams that entravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move."

The Idylls display Tennyson at his best. The blank verse is exquisite, and the story has a charm not found in any of the earlier versions. Peter Bayne ("Lessons From My Masters-" page 344) says, "His words gleam like pearls and opals, like rubies and emeralds . He yokes the stern vocables of the English tongue to the chariot of his imagination, and they become gracefully brilliant as the leopards of Bacchus, soft and glowing as the Cytherean roses. He must have been born with an ear for verbal sounds, an instinctive appreciation of the beautiful and delicate in words, hardly ever equalled . His earliest poems are festoons of verbal beauty, which he seems to shake sportively as if he loved to see jewel and agate and almondine glittering amidst tropical flowers."

and Arthurian story from the XVIth century, page 312.

"I am Merlin,
And I am spring,
I am Merlin
The foltsome sea Glass.

.....

On the forehead
Of Arthur the Glassglass
Rested the glass

.....

There on the border
Of boundless ocean,
And all out in Heaven
Soars the Glass.

.....

A young mariner,

.....

After it, follow it,
Follow the Glass."

This is suggestive of the lines in Ulysses, "who voyages on the vanishing goal,

Where glasses that entrance'd world, whose margin fades
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Farther on, Bayne says, referring to the "faint Homeric echoes," mentioned in the preface to Morte D'Arthur," not only in the language is it Homeric, but in the design and manner of treatment. The concentration of interest on the hero, the absence of all modernism in the way of love-story or passion-painting, the martial clearness, terseness, brevity of the narrative, with definite specification, at the same time, of detail, are exquisitely true to the Homeric patterns . In some places the language reads like actual translation. Sir Bedivere, when Arthur sent him to cast the hand Excaliber into the mere, gazed upon the jewelled hilt and stood,

"This way and that dividing the swift wind,
In act to throw."

This is exactly what Homer would have said. The knight, taking up Arthur to carry him to the barge,

"Swiftly strode, from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath and looking as he walk'd
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before his own thought drove him like a goad."

These are, indeed, "Homeric echoes," and they prepare us to find that the few lines that Tennyson has translated from the Iliad are perhaps the finest translation in the language." (p.347)

So much for Tennyson's diction. A discussion of Tennyson's allegory is found in Maccallum's "Arthurian Story" (.p. 322-323)

"It would clearly be straining the poem, and the e xplanation as well to hunt for allegories where no allegories are. Tennyson is comparatively simple and straightforward in the elder Idylls, and into their details it would hardly do to read subtle meanings. At the same time, the later Idylls are not an independent growth, but only an after development of the same stock; and an explanation

Further on, Tagore says, referring to the "Saint Homeric echoes," mentioned in the preface to Morte D'Arthur," not only in the language in it Morris, but in the design and manner of treatment. The concentration of interest on the hero, the absence of all endeavor in the way of love-story or question-taking the marital disorders, tenderness, brevity of the narrative, with definite specification, at the same time of detail, are equally true to the Homeric patterns. In some phrase the language rings like actual translation. Sir Bedivere, when Arthur sent him to cast the Dead Excalibur into the mere, passed upon the jewelled hilt and stood,

"Half my mind bade thee throwing the gift wind,
to go to stress."

This is exactly what Homer would have said. The knight,

having up Arthur to carry him to the barge,

"staggering strong, from ridge to ridge,
Plodded also he, breath and looking as he walk'd
larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep critical sigh, and a cry
Before it, over the dead dove sigh like a groan."

These are, indeed, "Homeric echoes," and they prepare us to find that the few lines that Tennyson has translated from the Iliad are perhaps the finest translation in the language." (p.347)

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which is true of them, will also apply, though less evidently and circumstantially, to their predecessors. Their author at least considered the whole series sufficiently alike to fit into one frame without any violation of poetical harmony. This implies that there is no difference of principle between the various parts, but at most a difference in the extent to which the principle is carried through. In the last Idylls the allegory is present everywhere, coloring the smallest minutial and conscoiusly working itself out; in the earlier it is more fitful and less pervasive; it is rather a vague presentation than an articulate thought, but it is there, and is not a mere cobweb woven by criticism. We have the warrant of the poet for using the allegorical clue, and using for the poem as a whole. He invites us to the task in his envoy to the Queen." Accept," he says,

> "This old imperfect tale,
> New-old, and shadowing sense at war with soul,
> Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak
> And cleaves to cairn, and cromlech still, or him
> Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's one
> Touched by the admitterous finger of a time,
> That hovered between war and wantonness,
> And crownings and dethronements."

This statements is authoriatative and unmistakable . And Tennyson here does moretthan tell us that his poem is allegorical, he gives us a hint as to what the allegory is. His Arthur is not the Arthur of Celtic legend, or of romantic history, or even of chivalrous romance, but he shadows and embodies the spiritual principle in conflict with the oppositions of sense."

A survey of the Arthurian story demands some mention also of Tennyson's comtemporaries both at home and abroad. First, those on the continent.

Goethe, in his Faust, has Merlin as the arch-enchanter. Another German writer of the period is Karl Immermann (1796-1840). His

"Merlin, Eine Mythe," appeared in 1832. In France, Edgar Quinet wrote "Merlin l'Enchanteur", a "legend of the human soul till death and beyond."

Then there are two minor German poets. F. Roeber, who in his "Tristan and Isolde" (1856) "tries to vivify the details of the old material," and L. Schneegans, who in his "Tristan" (1866) who tries to modernize its tone and setting." (Maccallum, p. 331)

In 1859, appeared Richard Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde". This is an opera of great dramatic power. Wagner's Parsifal was composed in 1877. Another German author, Hahn, (1837) uses Percivale as a character in his drama of "Griseldis", this version does not mention any connection with the Grail.

The Grail appears, however in Joseph Pape's "Schneewittchen vom Gral" (1856) " a narrative poem composed in the stanza of the medieval style. Here, too, however, the mixture of incongruous elements--keeps it from having any real connection with the Grail legend. " (Maccallum p. 238)

Others of lesser note, San Marte, Simrock, Kurz, tried to translate the medieval poems. Wilhelm Hertz, in 1860, produced "Lanzelot und Genevra", a very pretty and attractive poem, and in 1877, a modern rendering of the Tristan and Isolde of Gottfried of Strassburg. (Gottfried, as mentioned in an earlier section was a contemporary of Hartman von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Walther von der Vogelweide, and his epic Tristan was written about the year 1210. (Encyc. Brittan.) C. Bruce has translated Hertz into English (1865) in a poem entitled the "Story of Queen Guenevere and Sir Lancelot."

Tennyson's contemporaries in England were Lytton, who wrote a romance entitled "King Arthur" (1848) It is not entirely without merit, though it failed of success because

"Merlin, Eine Mythe," appeared in 1832. Ludwig Uhland wrote "Merlin l'Enchanteur", a "legend of the human soul still dark and beyond."

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of its antiquated style, reminding one somewhat of Heber's Morte D'Arthur.

Matthew Arnold's Tristram and Iseult appeared in 1852, his version "lays almost exclusive stress on the modern aspects of the tale. William Morris's "Defense of Guenevere" and "King Arthur's Tomb" which appeared in 1858, are as distinctively mediaeval. Robert Stephenn Hawkes, who wrote the "Quest of the Sangraal" in 1863 produced a work "filled with the mystic significance of his theme, but his conception is not that of the middle ages, and does not lie particularly close to the life of our own day". (Maccallum, p. 253)

"Arnold's poem is full of beauty and pathos, but its connection with the elder versions is very slight. Its medievalism is confined to a few superficial thouches."(Maccallum p. 256)

Morris, in his verses, suggests somewhat the "Lady of Shalott."He is distinctly medieval, however, in his handling of the theme, and does not always stick to historical facts. Hawkes (1804-1875) is also very medieval. His "Quest of the Sangraal" vanished vase of Heaven,

> That held like Christ's own heart on him of blood,
> Ho for the Sangraal! How the merry shout
> Of reckless riders on the rushing steed
> Smote the loose echo from the drowsy rock,
> Of grim Dundagel, throned along the sea."

It is, however, only a fragment, which has no satisfactory conclusion. The few lines above will show the style of the writer.

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> That held like Christ's own heart on his of blood,
> No for the Sangreal! Now the merry chout
> Of reckless riders on the rushing steed
> Smote the lones echo from the dismay rock,
> Of with Tintagel, thrown along the sea."

It is, however, only a fragment, which has no satisfactory conclusion. The few lines above will show the style of the writer.

A poem which Hawkes addressed to Tennyson in 1859 showed the former's appreciation of the earlier Idylls:

"They told me in their shadowy phrase
Caught from a tale gone by,
That Arthur king of Cornish praise
Died not and would not die!

Dreams had they, that in fairy bowers
Their living warrior lies;
Or wears a garland of the flowers
That grow in Paradise!

I read the Rime with deeper ken
And thus the myth I trace:-
A bard should rise, midst future men
The mightiest of his race.

He!-would great Arthur's name rehearse
On gray Dundagel's shore;
And so the king! in laurelled verse
Shall live and die no more."
(R. S. Hawke's Poetical Works, 1879)

Minor writers are very numerous at this period. An anonymous poem, "Arthur's Knights", appeared in 1859. Gordon (the poet of the Australian race-course) in 1868, produced the "Rhyme of Joyous Garde". The first of these deals with the quest of the Grail, the second has for its motif the remorse of Lancelot.

F. Maillard, in 1870, produced a poem called "Tristram and Iseult," which sometimes sounds a little like Tennyson.

"Twice twenty days they wandered; on the last
Footsore and fainting, o'er a withered heath
Which seemed the world-end, they beheld the sun
Wrapped in a ghastly veil of thin-drawn mist,
Slope slowly westward, as his last damp rays
That gleamed like embers in a dying fire,
Sank in the vapour, suddenly a vale
Dark, deep and woody, yawned before their feet,
Into the which they stumbled; the chill night
Struck like a palsy through their sluggish veins."

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"They told me in their shadowy phrase
Sought from a tale gone by,
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Dreams that they, that in fairy course
Their living warrior lies;
Or there's a garland of the flowers
That grow in Tarmiat!

I read the Tale with deeper ken
And thus the myth I trace:-
A Grail should rise, mighty future men
The slightest of his race.

Hail-would great Arthur's name resource
On gray Tundagel's shore,
And so the king! in immortal verse
Shall live as his to more."
(F. T. Hawke's Poetical Works, 1876)

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F. Maitland, in 1870, produced a poem called "Tristram and Iseult," which sometimes sounds a little like Tennyson.

"Twice twenty days they wandered, on the lear
Footsore and fainting, o'ermastered death
Which caused the world-end, they could all the sun
Dropped in a ghastly veil of thick-drawn mist,
Hope slowly vanished, as his last dawn rose
That glimmed like embers in a dying fire,
Sank in the vapour, suddenly a vale
Dark, deep and woody, pinned cotes their feet,
Into the which they stumbled, the chill mist
Struck like a pulse through their sluggish veins."

The best of these minor works is that of B. A. Sincox (1869) the "Farewell of Ganore". His characters are evidently conceived from Tennyson's early Idylls. He has written also a poem called "Gawain and the Lady of Avalon":

"The dew was on her raven hair
And her blue glistering eye
No dust on foot or ankle bare
Though all the land was dry;
And every knight was ready there
To wed with her or die."

After 1870, there are fewer Arthurian poems. In 1882, we find Swinburne writing "Tristram of Lyonesse" which is in a sense a counterpart of "The Last Tournament". Like all Swinburne's poems, it displays a sort of naturalistic Pantheism. "Peace they have that none may gain who live

And rest about them that no love can give,

And over them while death and life shall be

The light and sound and darkness of the sea."

Professor John Veitch is the author of several poems on these motifs. "Cymric Town":

"By the cave are the ancient graves,
On this high and airy height,
No lowlier tomb for the Cymri
Than the eagle sweeps in his flight!"
(In a volume called "Merlin and Other Poems")

To this period belong also Mark Twain's "Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court", which is written in Clemens's characteristic humorous style. James Russell Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal", which is noted chiefly for the lines

"O, what is so rare as a day in June," etc.

The series of pictures in the Boston Public Library deserves mention here. They are the work of Edwin Austin Abbey, an American painter, who spent several years on the frescoes there, entitled "The Quest of the Holy Grail". In these, Galahad is made the hero.

VII Twentieth Century Versions

The authors who have done the most noteworthy work on the Arthurian story in the twentieth century are Erskine, Masefield and Robinson.

Edward Arlington Robinson has treated the stories of Lancelot, Merlin, and Tristram in a masterly way. "Merlin" which appeared in 1917 is a poem in blank verse, somewhat in the strain of Tennyson, as may be seen from the opening lines:

"Gawaine, Gawaine, what look ye for to see,
So far beyond the faint edge of the world?
D'ye look to see the lady Vivian,
Pursued by divers ominous vile demons
That have another king more fierce than ours?
Or think ye if ye look far enough
And hard enough into the feathery west
Ye'll have a glimmer of the Grail itself?
And if ye look for neither Grail nor lady,
What look ye for to see, Gawaine, Gawaine?"

Amy Lowell says of this poem:" The most recent poem which Mr. Robinson has written "Merlin" was published by the Macmillan Company in March 1917. This is, as its name implies, a re-telling of the Arthurian legend, and one cannot help a slight feeling of disappointment that this re-telling is neither so new nor so different as might have been expected. For some reason, the author seems to have abandoned his peculiar and personal style. Instead of a vivid, modern reading of an old theme, we find in this book only a rather feeble and emasculated picture, tricked out with charming lyrical figures, it is true, but lifeless and unconvincing. Merlin is no great wizard, swept into Vivien's toils by a fascination which no

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Edward Arlington Robinson has treated the stories of Launcelot, Merlin, and Tristram in a masterly way. "Merlin" which appeared in 1917 is a poem in blank verse, somewhat in the strain of Tennyson, as may be seen from the opening lines:

> "Dawning, Dawning, what look ye for to see,
> So far beyond the faint edge of the world?
> I'ye look to see the lady Vivian,
> Pursued by divers odious vile demons
> That have another kind more fierce than ours!
> Or think ye if ye look far enough,
> And hard enough into the foggy west
> Ye'll have a glimmer of the Grail itself?
> And if ye look for neither Grail nor lady,
> What look ye for to see, Dawning, Dawning?"

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man, not even he, playing at a pastoral. Even when conflicting emotions are supposed to tear him, they do not tear, in spite of the author's assurances:

"When we parted

I told her I should see the king again,
And having seen him, might go back again
To see her face once more. But I shall see
No more the lady Vivian. Let her love
What man she may, no other love than mine
Shall be an index of her memories.
I fear no man who may come after me,
And I see none. I see her, still in green,
Beside the fountain. I shall not go back,
We pay for going back; and all we get
Is one more needless ounce of weary wisdom
To bring away with us. If I come not,
The lady Vivian will remember me,
And say: "I knew him when his heart was young,
Though I have lost him now. Time called him home,
And that was as it was; for much is lost
Between Broceliande and Camelot."

"This is the language of weakness, not of resolution. To be sure, Merlin is a broken man; but nothing in the poem carries a conviction that he was ever very much otherwise.

It is a long, meandering tale of some thirteen hundred blank verse lines. But the fault is not in its length, it is in the manner in which the poet has composed his story. Now the poet who would be a story-teller must concern himself with something beside poetry, beside psychology; he must learn the manipulation of plot. It is just in this matter of plot that Mr. Robinson's work reveals its less able side. In reading it, we feel that Mr. Robinson was hampered by the weight of tradition hanging about his subject.

It is good work, creditable work, but it is not great work and the poet's peculiar excellencies are often lacking. There

is too much of the fustian of the antiquary; too little of the creative vision of the poet. In "Merlin", we turn over the pages of a beautiful picture-book, a portfolio of old, rare prints. They have nothing to do with us, nor we with them. They are charming, but remote, and they are only pictures.

"Merlin" teases by a constant change of scene, now forward, now backward, now action, now reminiscence. This long mood of recollection delays the action, stays the movement so completely that it is never quite recovered, and the feeling of unreality, of dream, persists to the end. His poems do not invigorate; they mellow and subdue. But in our material day, the spirituality of Mr. Robinson's work is tonic and uplifting. ("Tendencies in Modern American Poetry"-by Amy Lowell p. 63-75)

His most recent poem, "Tristram", published in 1927, is in narrative form, a dramatic rendering of the legend of Tristram and the two Isolts. It is regarded by the reviewers as one of the best of the variants of the legend. An extract will show the style.

"Isolt smiled,
As with a willing pity, and closed her eyes
To keep more tears from coming out of them;
And for a time nothing was to be heard
Except the pounding of two hearts in prison
The torture of a doom-begotten music
Above them, and the wash of a cold foam
Below them on those cold eternal rocks
Where Tristram and Isolt had yesterday
Come to be wrecked together. When her eyes
Opened again, he saw there, watching him,
An aching light of memory; and his heart
Beat harder for rembering the same light
That he had seen before in the same eyes."

This brings us naturally to "Tristan and Isolt, A Play and Verse", by John Masefield. This is a recent production, first

performed on Monday, 21st February 1927. The author exhibits the folly, madness and futility of the famous lovers without mercy.

Then John Erskine's "Galahad": the complete title is "Galahad": enough of his life to explain his reputation." The author has for his principal characters, King Arthur, Lancelot, Galahad, Guenevere and the two Elaines. All the characters are made to speak in a very modern way. Not a trace of mediaevalism is here; instead, satire and irony that take all the beauty and romance out of the old legend.

VII. COMPARISON of DIFFERENT VERSIONS

The earliest versions, the old Breton ballads, had very little of literary form, and it was not until the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century that they began to receive the artistic touches that made them real literature. For this work, Walter Map was probably responsible. The Arthurian romances, were, according to Henry Morley, all perfectly detached tales, till in the twelfth century Robert de Borron, at Map's suggestion, translated the first romanee of the St. Graal as an introduction to the series, and Map added his Quest of the Graal, Lancelot and Mort Artus. Geoffrey of Monmouth had represented Arthus as a historical personage, but Map, and in a lesser degree, Chrestien, made Arthur and his knights figures of romance.

"To appreciate fully how much Walter Map accomplished by his series of stories with regard to King Arthur's court, it should be remembered that poets and painters have in many generations ever since found subjects for their inspiration within the bounds of the work which he created . After all, the main interest of succeeding poets who have put the legend into later forms, has centred more in the depth of humanity that there is in the stories, than in the poetic details for which they themselves have been responsible. The succeeding generations, poets have often felt that these stories were so beautiful that they deserved to be retold in terms readily comprehensible to their own generation. Hence Malory wrote his Morte D'Arthur for the fifteenth century, Spenser used certain

portions of the old myth for the sixteenth, and the late poet-laureate set himself once more to retell the Idylls of the King for the nineteenth century. Each of these was adding little but new literary form, to a work that genius had drawn from sources so close to the heart of human nature, that the stories were always to remain of enduring interest.

For the treasure of poetry with which humanity was enriched when he conceived the idea of setting the old ballads of King Arthur into literary form, more must be considered as due to the literary original writer than to any of his great successors. This is precisely the merit of Walter Map.

There are several anonymous Scotch poems of 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, dealing with the Arthurian topics. Of course, these are of interest from the standpoint of the history of the legend, but after all, our great creative writers were Map, Wace, Layoman, Chrestien, Malory and Tennyson.

Spenser hardly belongs here, because,as before stated, his "Faerie Queene" was not meant to be a version of the Arthurian story as such, only an allegory.

Layoman's "Brut" represented the first appearance of the tale in English. While the legends are Celtic in origin, their literary form is due to the French poets, who originated the metrical romance (Chrestien's were in octosyllabic verse,) While Layoman follows Wace's poem, he paraphrases and introduces legends that were unknown to Wace.

Chrestien and Malory have already been taken up in detail.

Stafford Brooke, in his work "Tennyson" says: "It is not, however, with an historical, but with a mythical Arthur that we have to deal. There is not one touch of the real world in all the scenery that Tennyson invents in his poem. He has built up around his people the image of a whole country, with its woods and streams, hills and moors, marsh and desert, dark oceans rolling in on iron coasts, vast waters, ancient records of a bygone world. And over them he has shed a light from the ancient time, a romantic air and sky. These things belong to art.

Moreover, within the realm of art much might be said of the technique of the verse. The poem belongs-though its composition stretched over so many years to the central period of the blank verse of Tennyson. His blank verse stands apart, original, growing out of his own character and temper, and frequently modified and specialized by the special characters which he he is describing , and by the special forms of natural scenery which he paints. Lastly, it is extravagantly concise, almost too concise. We are too conscious of its skill, of the infinite care spent upon it, of a certain want of naturalness, that is, it has the defects of its qualities. But we forget these defects when it is at its best. Then indeed it is extraordinarily noble, rolling like a full-fed river through the country of imagination. Such is it in"The Holy Grail", in "Guenevere", and in "The Passing of Arthur".

We find too , sometimes, that his characters are very improbable. That is, they seem so to us now. His women are typical

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We find too, moreover, that his characters are very impressive. That is, they seem so to us now. His women are typical

mid-Victorian ladies, who condone all offenses committed by their lords, and continue to "love" the fatherless or the brutal, as in his portrayal of the Geraint and Enid characters. Brooke says, "Enid is Tennyson's Griselda".

Another criticism made by Brooke is that Tennyson often leaves out too much of the original, so that his conception and rendering are necessarily very different from the originals.

Thus, in the Geraint and Enid:"So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,

And issuing under open heavens beheld

A little town with towers, upon a rock,

And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it,

And down a rocky pathway from the place

There came a fair-haired youth."

In the original, Lady Charlotte, Guest's translation, of the Mabinogion, we find:

"And early in the day they left the wood,

And they came to an open country, with meadows on one hand

And mowers mowing in the meadows,

And there was a river before them and the horses bent down

And drank the water.

And they went up out of the water by a lofty step,

And there they met a tender stripling with a satchel about his neck,

And they saw that there was something in the satchel, but they knew not what it was.

And he had a small blue pitcher in his hand, and a bowl on the mouth of the pitcher,

And the youth saluted Geraint", etc.

Alfred Noyes, however, in "Some Aspects of Modern Poetry" says:

mid-Victorian ladies, who condone all offenses committed by their lords, and continue to "love" the ferocious or the brutal, as in his portrayal of the Geraint and Enid characters. Brooke says, "Mild is Tennyson's Guinevere".

Another criticism made by Brooke is that Tennyson often leaves out too much of the original, so that his conception and teaching are necessarily very different from the original.

Thus, in the Geraint and Enid:"So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,

And issuing under open heavens behold

A little town with towers, upon a rock,

And close beneath, a castle gaining change

In the brown wild, and mosses coming in it,

And down a rocky pathway from the place

There came a fair-haired youth."

To the original, Lady Charlotte, Guest's translation, of the Mabinogion, we find:

"And early in the day they left the wood,

And they came to an open country, with meadows on one hand

And corn-fields growing in the meadows,

And there was a river before them and the horses bent down

And drank the water.

And they went up out of the water by a lofty step,

And there they met a tender stripling with a satchel about his neck,

And they saw that there was something in the satchel, but they knew not what it was.

And he had a small blue pitcher in his hand, and a bowl on the mouth of the pitcher,

And the youth saluted Geraint", etc.

Alfred Noyes, however, in "Some Aspects of Modern Poetry" says:

"The blank verse of Tennyson is, beyond question, the finest since Milton. "He speaks of the spiritual values in the Idylls, and the fact that the sea, with Tennyson, as with the other poets, was an image of Eternity. Thus in Morte D 'Arthur:

So all day long in the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur, then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land,
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full."

Again, Noyes says,"At the end of the same poem he obtains one of the most magnificent closing effects in all poetry, by his use of sea, distances, and the subtle blending of them in his music with the words of the dying King, and the vision of the happy island of Avilion, the land of the hereafter. The last words of the King begin with a solemm change in the music of the blank verse which is not to be paralleled in Milton or any other master of that great instruments."

(Some aspects of Modern Poetry. Page 171)

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new, And God fulfills himself in many ways, Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Lyall says (in his book entitled "Tennyson") "Folklore has rarely undergone such changes of style and transformations of environment in its passage through different countries and successive generations as the Arthurian legend has exhibited from its origin among the Celts of insular Britain to its latest revival in modern English poetry. The lays and tales of Arthur and his knights, the relics of a large number that have been lost, were saved from oblivion in England by the Anglo-Normans, whose poetic instinct led them to enjoy in their courts and castles the songs of wandering minstrels and popular stories of marvellous adventure. Thus the primitive element took a Romanesque fashion and was expanded in the spirit of mediaeval chivalry; the legends were translated into French and English, until at last they were gathered together and fixed permanently in an English form when Caxton printed Sir Thomas Malory's collection. A whole cycle surrounds the central figure of King Arthur , whome one may conjecture to have embodied the true tradition of some valiant chief who fought hard for his lands and his people against the Saxon invaders; form a prehistoric age it is the real hero, famous when he lived, who becomes fabulous after his death. And so Arthur emerged out of a period of darkest confusion, trailing after him Christian myths and heroic legends, he passed through wandering minstrelsy to prose romance, and then again into poetry, when he became the portrait, in Spenser's "Faerie Queene", of a brave knight perfected in the twelve moral virtues, the leading actor in an

alleagory that is supposed to teach morals and politics under a transparent masque of adventurous knight-errantry.

During the classical and rationalistic period of eighteenth century poetry King Arthur's romantic figure suffered eclipse, until in the early nineteenth centnry Malory's book was republished. And lastly, he shone out again fifty years later in the Idylls modelled by Tennyson after the type used by Spenser as the image of lofty morality. Spenser's "Faerie Queene" was frankly allegorical That Tennyson could excel in the art of veiling an experience of all ages under an allegory we know from his short poem, "The Lady of Shalott". Tennyson did not admit that his poems were allegories or had any esoteric meaning.

This sums up briefly the growth of the legend down to and including Tennyson. His contemporaries and successors are taken up fully elsewhere.

IX Chronological Table and Summary

1. Gildas, "De Excidio Britanniae, or Account of the Destruction of Britain," about 6th century, exact date unknown, probably about 540 A. D. Gildas does not mention Arthur by name, but because he mentions the battle of Mount Badon, in which, according to other chronicles, Arthur took a part.

2. Nennius (Welsh Nynnian) Historia Brittonum, date somewhat doubtful probably about 796 or 800; describes battle of Mount Badon, "where nine hundred and sixty men fall before Arthur's single onset-de uno impetu Arthur." "The Marvels of Britain" give us nothing but legend.

3. The Black Book of Carmatheu, MS.of the twelfth century, "The Stanzas of the Graves."

"A grave there is for March, a grave for Gwythur, a grave for Gwguwn of the Ruddy Sword; a mystery is the grave of Arthur." Other stories of the Mabinogion Kulhurch and Olwen, and the Dream of Rhonebrony (The Lady of the Fountain, Geraint, son of Erbin, and Peredur, son of Evranve, derived from French

4. William of Malinesbury, about 1125

5. Annales Cambriae 10th century

6. Welsh bards, Llywarch Hen, Aneurin, Taliessin, 6th to 10th centuries. (Pseudo-Tahessin)(Myvyrin Archaiology)

7. Walter Calennius about 1125

8. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Britonum, perhaps 1128 or before 1139, most probably 1136.

9. Geoffrey Galmar, metrical history, abouth 12th century, exact date unknown (1147-1151)

10. Berol, 1150 or later (also spelled Beroul)
Poem on Tristram, a part of which survives.

11. Wace, Robert. about 1150 to 1155 Geste de Bretons

12. Layoman, author of "Bruit" about 1200

13. Tysillio's Brut, from the Red Book of Hergest, about 14th century

14. Chrestien de Troyes, about 1190

15. Robert of Bloucester, end of 13th century

16. Robert de Borron 13th century

17. Lucas de Gast (?) about the same

18. Helie de Borron (?) time

19. Robert de Brune 1331

20. William of Newbury, contemporary of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who inveigled against the impudence of a "writer called Geoffrey", who had made "Arthur's little finger bigger than Alexander's back."

"Quidam nostris temporibus, pro expiandis bis Britonum maculis, scriptor emersit, ridicula de eisdem figmenta contexit ens.

-------Ganfridus hic dictus est-Profecto minimum digitum sui Arturi grossiorem facit dorso Alexandri magni." St. Thomas, about 1170. We have only fragments of this.

21. Gotfrid of Strasburg, exact date unknown

22. Wolfram von Eschensach, end of 12th and beginning of 13th century, Writes same of Percival as Chrestien does, in his Perceval, but varies toward the end.

23. Hartman von Au, contemporary of Gottfried von Strasburg and Wolfram von Eschenbach.

24. Dante, middle and latter part of thirteenth centuries, mentions, in his "Divine Comedy", Merlin, Arthur, etc.

25. Joseph of Exeter, author of Latin poem, on Trojan War, between 1178 and 1183, mentions Arthur, "Flos regnum Arthur", whose return was still expected by the Britons, "Britonum ridenda fides."

26. Peter Langtoft

27. Ariosto, 1474-1533

28. Tasso 1544-1595

29. Eilhart von Oberge, medieval writer, Tristram legend

30. Hugo Von Trumberg, end of 13th century, condems reading of "Parzival and "Tristram"

31. Roger Aschan, contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, condems reading of books of chivalry, especially Morte D'Arthur

32. Edmund Spenser, the Faerie Queene 1590

33 Thomas Hughes, The Misfortunes of Arthur, 1587

34. Sackville, Corbudoc

35. Michael Drayton, Polyolbion 1613 and 1623

36. Hakluyt, 1589. Voyages. The first voyage described is that of King Arthur of Iceland in 507. This narrative, however, is founded on a myth.

37. The Birth of Merlin, classed as one of Shakespeare's doubtful plays

38. Milton, 1638-39 Epistle to Manso

39. Heywood, 1641. Life of Merlin

40. Sieur de la Colombiere, 1648,"Vray Theatre d'Honneur et de Chevalerie"

41. Sir Richard Blackmore, 1695 "King Arthur", and "Prince Arthur"

42. Dryden-"King Arthur"-a play

43. Fielding 1730 Tom Thumb

44. Evans. 1764. Specimens of the Ancient Welsh Bards

45. Tressan 1732. The Tristram Story.

26. Peter Langtoft

27. Triboto, 1479-1513

28. Tasso 1544-1595

29. Hilbert von Berge, medieval writer, Tristram legend

30. Hugo Von Trimberg, end of 13th century, sociomoralizing of "Parzival and "T-istram"

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42. Dryden-"King Arthur"-a play

43. Wielding 1730 Tom Thumb

44. Evans, 1734. Coronation of the Ancient Welsh Bards

45. Freeman 1738. The Britisem Story.

46. 1771 Summer's Tale, and The Mule Without a Bridle
1778, Giron the Noble

47. Warton 1777. The Grave of King Arthur

48. Leyden, 1803. Scenes of Infancy

49. Scott, 1805 Sir Tristram,1813, Bridal of Triermain

50. Heber 1812 Morte D'Arthur, Masque of Gwendolen

51. De L^sser. La Chevalerie

52. Southey. 1805 Madoc

53. Peacock 1829 Misfortunes of Elphin

54. Wordsworth 1815 Artegal and Elidure, Ecclesiastical Sonnets 1821
The Egyptian Maid 1830

55. Quinet 1830 Merlin L'Enchanteur

56. Immerman 1832. Merlin, Eine Mythe: Mystery of Merlin

57. Roeber 1856 Tristan and Isolde

58. Paulin Caris 1868 Romans de la Table Ronde

59. Schneegans 1865 Tristan

60. Wagner 1859 Tristan und Isolde 1877 Parsifal

61. Hahn 1837 Griseldis

62. Pope 1856 Shhnee wittchess von Gral

63. Hertz 1860 Lanzelot und Genevra

64. Lytton, 1848 King Arthur

65. Arnold 1852 Tristram and Iseult

66. Morris 1858 Defence of Guenevere, etc.

67 . Hawkes 1863 Quest of the Sangraal

68. 1859 Anonymous poems Arthur's Knights

69. Gordon 1868 Rhyme of Joyous Garde

70. Millard 1970 Tristram and Iseult

71. Suncox 1869 Farewell of Ganore, Gawain and the Lady of Avalon

72. Tennyson 1833-1889 (Lady of Shalott 1833-Merlin and the Gleam
1889 Idylls during years between

73 Swinburne 1882 Tristram of Lyonesse

74. Veitch Cymric Town

75. Mark Twain "Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court"

76. Abbey: Mural paintings in Boston Public Library

77. Masefield 1927

78. Robinson : Merlin 1917 : Tristram 1927

79. Erskine "Galahad" 1927

IX NOTES

1. "The name Airen means ploughman, and possibly conveys reference to the triumphs of the Aryan farmer over the ruder native."
Rhys-The Welsh People. p. 45

2. Idem. p. 592-593

3. Gurteen, S. Humphreys, "The Arthurian Epic", New York and London, 1895

4. Littledale, "Essays on the Idylls of the King", p. 2

5. Idem, pages 2-3

6. "A British record (long concealed In Old Armorica)
whose secret springs no Gothic conqueror e'er drank."
Wordsworth: "Artegal and Elidure."

7. Littledale, "Essay on the Idylls of the King", page 5

8. Saintsbury, "Short History of French Literature," p.35

9. Idem pp. 35-37

10. Cambridge History English Literature vol.i. page 276-77

11. Gurteen, "The Arthurian Epic", p. 100

12. Saintsbury, " A Short History of French Literature, p. 37-38

13. Idem, p. 40

14. Gurteen, "The Arthurian Epic, p. 84-85

15. Littledale:"Essays on Lord Tennyson's Idylls of the King" p. 14-16

16. Idem, p. 16

17. Gurteen, "The Arthurian Epic, " p. 40

18. Maccallum:"Tennyson's Idylls of the King", p. 120

19. Idem p. 131-132

20. Idem p. 134-136

21. "King Arthur in Cornwall,"Dickinson pp.VI-VII 3-8

22. Walsh, "The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries,"p.176-177

A FEW FURTHER NOTES ABOUT THE EARLY LEGENDS

Gaston Paris says that the romances are of insular or Celtic origin and that the Anglo-Norman tales were the intermedias between the Celtic versions and that of Chrestien. Other critics think the Celtic tales of Armorica are more important. Paris says the Celtic element is essentiel; Foerster says it is extrinsic and largely unimportant.

The spirit of chivalry and of courtly life is French, and the basic motif with Chrestien. Voretzsch thinks the fairy lore is more than a mere ornament, that it changes all the surroundings giving French literature a new sort of world, that these are not mere episodes, but vital points. He has given an immense amount of data, as to the original center of the Celtic traditions.

The French Bretons (Armoricans) reached the continent in the sixth century, and brought with them from Wales, the element which was originally the insular Celtic, most of the scholars who deal with this Celtic element try to explain too much.

The Breton traditions dealing with Avalon, the Isles of the Blessed, where Arthur is carried after death, were developed without doubt in Armorica.

Voretzsch thinks, however, that they came from Geoffrey of Monmouth. Some critics want to find that Geoffrey got all his material from oral and written sources already in existence. It seems more probable that he had imagination enough to invent much of his 'plot'.

The Mabinogion can be explained as an imitation or translation of the French. There is, however, nothing that can be used as a standard of comparison between the Mabniogion and Chrestien.

Voretzsch thinks that Chrestien was a great originator, capable of inventing many episodes. This, indeed, is the opinion of most commentators. The Eric, which is one of Chrestien's early Romances, is crude compared to his later works. It is closer to the Chansons de Geste in style. He improves in technique , draws largely from Celtic material, makes out of it atmosphere, and background, in fact, is a consummate artist. His method is psychological analysis, the way in which he combines various elements, and moulds them all together, gives his tales a typical medieval slant. The dialogue shows him to be a man of the world. He was not a mere entertainer, however, he was a teacher as well. In Eric, there is a conflict between conjugal love and knightly duty. In Lancelot, he has an ~~universal~~ immoral subject which he handles with disgust, and finally drops. In his romances, he exalts conjugal love. The Perceval idealizes chivalry and spiritualizes it, depicts the perfect knight and the perfect Christian.

In Tristram, we find the glorification of illicit love, and emotion more powerful than honor, than death, than life. Some say the name "Tristram" is of Pictish origin. "Drost", "Drostan", and later "Drystan", "Trystam". More recent scholars say it is not Pictish, but was Celtic from the beginning.

Mark and Iseult was probably of Celtic origin; though Celtic and Germanic elements on the coast of Ireland; Dublin was a Viking port. The name of the heroine varies: Iseit, Isolt, Isult, Ishilt (Germanic) (daughter of a Viking king); Issylt (Celtic) The name

The Lancelot can be explained as an imitation or translation of the Tristan. There is, however, nothing that can be used as a standard of comparison between the Lancelot and Tristan.

Varnhagen thinks that Chrestien was a great criticaster, capable of inventing many episodes. This, indeed, is the opinion of most critics. The Erec, which is one of Chrestien's early romances, is much compared to his later works. It is closer to the Tristan de Beroul in style. He improves in technique, drawn largely from Celtic material, makes out of it atmosphere, and background. In fact, he is a consummate artist. His method is psychological analysis, the way in which he combines various elements, and molds them all together, gives his tales a typical mediaval plant. The allegorist shows him to be a man of the world. He was not a mere romancer, however, he was a teacher as well. In Erec, there is a conflict between conjugal love and knightly duty. In Lancelot, he has an always lurking lyrical subject which he handles with elegance, and finally drops. In his romances, he exalts conjugal love. The Tristan, imposition chivalry and spiritualizing it, depicts the perfect knight and the perfect Christian.

In Tristan, we find the glorification of illicit love, and another more powerful than honor, than death, than life. Some say the name "Tristram" is of Pictish origin. "Drost", "Drostan", and later "Tryster", "Tryster". More recent scholars say it is not Pictish, but was Celtic from the beginning.

Mark and Isault are probably of Celtic origin, though Celtic and Germanic elements on the coast of Ireland. Dublin was a Viking port. The name of the heroine varies: Isoude, Isolt, Isult, Ioult (Germanic) (daughter of a Viking King); Isoyit (Celtic) The name

Mark is probably derived from the Welsh, and means horse (cf.Hengist and Horsa in Anglo*Saxon)

Foister says that the Mabinogion is derived from Chrestien. The word "Mabinogion" is Welsh, and means "an apprentice to a bard", who learned stories to recite. The "Mabinogi" was a tale so acquired, and "Mabinogion", the plural of this word. The Mabinogion, as has been mentioned elsewhere, consisted of tales from the Red Book of Hengist or Llyfe Coch and Hergest.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Percivale and Peredur (the poem found in the Mabniogion) mean the "Companion of the Dish," or Grail, from the Celtic "per", dish , and "cyfaill", "Keval", companion also "Kedur", contracted "edur", companion.

The word "grail" is old French from low Latin "gradale", akin to Latin "crater" and Greek κράτηρ, bowl. The spelling has been vitiated through a mistaken derivation of San Greal from Sang Real, real blood, " sanguinis realis". In 1227, Heliandus wrote in Latin a legend adapting the druidic mystery to Christianity, a mixture of druidic legends and the Sangreal.

Marie de France, in the 12th century, wrote "Le Chevre feuille, a short episode of the Tristan story. This tells how Tristan makes known his presence in the wood to Iseult. It is the best known example oc fhs "lais", a type of verses probably sung by the Breton minstrels and French trouveres.

Arthur's Seat- a well known lion-shaped hill immediately east of Edinburgh, rising to a height of 822 ft. above sea level. It is supposed to derive its name from the British king. When the hill received the appellation is not known, but at the close of the 15th century, the poet Kennedy mentions,"Arthur'sate or ony hieher hill."

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